

Alfred Burt

R E P O R T

OF THE

S C H O O L C O M M I T T E E

OF THE

T O W N O F O A K H A M ,

FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR, 1863-4.



WORCESTER:

ADAMS & BROWN, PRINTERS, 212 MAIN STREET.

(SUCCESSORS TO H. J. HOWLAND.)

1864.

REPORT
OF THE
SCHOOL COMMITTEE
OF THE
TOWN OF OAKHAM,
FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR, 1863-4.



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SCHOOL STATISTICS FOR THE YEAR 1863-4.

Districts.	TEACHERS.	Residence.	Proportion of School Money.	Wages per month	Length of School in days.	Gain or Loss.	No. of Scholars.	Gain or Loss.	Av. Attendance, per cent.	Gain or Loss.	Av. Attendance, per cent.	No. of Scholars, under five.	No. of Scholars over 15.	Proportion not absent or tardy.	Av. No. of Tardy Marks to each Scholar.	No. of Parents who Visited the Sch in term time	No. of Visitors during term time	No. of Parents at Examination.	No. of Visitors at Examination.
Summer Term.	E. C.	Louise P. Allen,		\$15.00	50	-10	32	3	.89	-04	.89	1	0	.31	0.9	3	12	6	25
	W. C.	Mary A. Lovell,		12.00	60	0	27	-4	.89	0	.89	0	0	0	0.6	0	18	6	
	S. W.	Josephine Leland,		13.00	40	40	8	8	.77	-08	.77	2	2	0	0.4	0	16	3	12
	S. H.	Carrie R. Harrington,		12.00	50	-10	23	-2	.95	0	.95	0	1	.65	.13	5	13	3	
	E. H.	No School.																	
	N. C.	Alice Adams,		12.00	50	-9	20	-1	.86	-02	.86	2	0	.4	1.1	0	8		
Winter Term.	E. C.	Louise P. Allen,		20.00	50	-5	38	-3	.92	.07	.92	0	11	.24	2.	1	16	10	44
	W. C.	Mary A. Lovell,		17.00	59	17	29	5	.85	0	.85	0	4	.31	0.5	3	21	7	34
	S. W.	Helen E. Dean,		20.00	52	8	15	1	.8	-06	.8	0	3	.13	0.86	1	4	3	9
	S. H.	Carrie R. Harrington,		18.00	65	7	27	0	.93	.04	.93	0	4	.37	.4	2	14	9	25
	E. H.	Mary F. Ross,		19.15	60	0	9	3	.83	-08	.83	0	3	.67	.33	2	10	6	15
	N. C.	Katie A. Peckham,		16.00	50	3	20	-7	.86	.01	.86	1	1	.35	.1	2	12	3	9
Winter Term.	C. W.	Ada L. Robinson,		19.00	65	5	37	-4	.81	-05	.81	1	4	0	6.	2	53	2	10
	W.	Henry P. Wright.		25.00	60	2	30	-6	.82	-01	.82	1	9	.17	2.1	2	18	52	11

R E P O R T .

The School Committee of Oakham, respectfully submit to their fellow citizens the following

ANNUAL REPORT.

The schools under our care have averaged higher this year than during the previous one, there have been no poor schools, none have degenerated from their former condition, and nearly all have made decided improvement. The general statistics of the schools will be found in a table accompanying this report, but the faithfulness, and earnestness, the hard work, energy and tact, manifested by the teachers, cannot be adequately presented in any report, but they deserve and receive the appreciation and the thanks of the committee and the community.

Your committee have taken special pains to visit the best schools within their reach, and to inquire into other methods of teaching, in order that whatever can add to the value of our schools, may be introduced. For where most of the teachers are trained in our own schools, there is special danger of ever walking in the same tracks, and thinking we are going toward the goal of perfection; like the knight in the forest, who, making a circuit, fell in with his own footsteps, and every time round, was more and more convinced that he was nearing some town, because the path was so well and so recently trodden.

We would earnestly recommend all who think of teaching, to visit the best schools, and especially those in the larger towns, and to read the Massachusetts Teacher. Indeed we do not see how a dollar could be made to pay so high a rate of interest, in any other way,

as by each districts taking the Massachusetts Teacher, for the benefit of the teacher in its school; and we hope every district will do so.

Reading.—Some of the schools have given special attention to reading, and the South-west made more improvement in that difficult art, than we have witnessed in any school for a long time. We cannot too much impress upon our teachers the need of *teaching* reading. The mere *going over* so many paragraphs a day, does very little good, even though the pupil is corrected on punctuation and manifestly wrong pronunciations. The habit of reading the book through in course, each scholar, every day hurried through a new paragraph, taking no time for correction and drill, fails of the best good to the reading classes. It is much better to select for a large part of the reading, a few pieces where there is scope for varied emphasis and modulations of the voice, and have the scholars *study* these pieces, then *drill* them on the natural and proper reading of them; let them correct one another and repeat again and again, till they get some standard for right modulation and emphasis, and some skill in the practice.

From experience and from observation, we are assured that one piece thus studied and taught will advance the pupils more in reading, than to read the whole book through in course in the manner often pursued.

Writing.—The committee have introduced into the schools Payson and Dunton's copy-books, and with good results. We are glad to say that they have been almost universally adopted. They are a little more expensive, but any one who has seen the advantages of them will cheerfully incur it.

Very few teachers can set copies that are perfect enough to be followed; and there is such a continual change of teachers, that what is gained in one term, by following one style of writing, is partially lost by imitating an entirely different style the next term. The only remedy seems to be books with printed copies, such as have been introduced and we hope no others will be used.

The North and West schools paid particular attention to thi

branch, and showed very neat copy-books and unusual improvement.

Singing and General Exercises.—Sufficient attention has not yet been given to singing and general exercises in our schools. We are gratified with the progress which has been made in singing, yet more time might with profit be given to it, and we desire that when possible there be no day of school without it. And object lessons, general arithmetical exercises and the like, which our normal school graduates have used so successfully might be adopted by other teachers with certain advantage. The short time they occupy will be more than made good by the increased interest of the pupils. Almost any teacher with a little care and preparation can succeed in these exercises.

Maps and Reports.—The law allows the committee to use one fourth of the school money received from the state in purchasing apparatus, &c. for the schools, and the Secretary of Education urges the committees to employ the money in this way. There is much need in all our schools of things of this kind—the school-rooms being almost destitute of maps, globes, and all manner of aids. There are probably but two geographies in all our schools from which the pupil can learn the present divisions of the United States, either how many states there are, or the number, position or names of the territories. To supply this manifest want the committee purchased paper county maps of the United States at twenty-five cents apiece for each of the schools from the state fund, also from the same fund they have bought cards for the weekly reports of the scholars. Altogether the cost was five dollars, nearly one half of the amount allowed by the law. This lessened the appropriation to each district sixty-two and one-half cents, and we are confident that the advantage to the schools is many fold that amount.

The weekly reports though a new thing here are not really a novelty, for they are used in nearly all the best schools with which we are acquainted; they show the scholar his standing in such a way as to lead him to more earnest efforts, by showing his defi-

ciencies, and by the desire for a clearer record, and they also show the parents the progress and faithfulness of their children so that they can give them the necessary help and encouragement at home to better scholarship. The advantages are increased when the parents are willing to examine and sign the reports.

They are a help in gauging the progress of the schools. For instance, in the South school there were not one third as many imperfect recitations in the latter half of the winter term as in the earlier half.

Districts.—There is need of redistricting the town, but with the present amount of taxes, it may not be advisable. But it does seem feasible and best that the South-west district be united with the West Centre. No pupil in this district resides farther from the school-house than some who are already in the district. It does not seem good economy to maintain so small a school as the South-west when there is plenty of room in the West Centre, and it is accessible; besides, by uniting the two districts, much larger and better schools might be supported.

There is no legal organization in the Colbrook district, and the duties commonly performed by the prudential committee have devolved on the general committee. We have been somewhat embarrassed during the year by having so little money with which to support a school in this district. The school was thrown into the hands of the committee in the Autumn of 1862. The school kept the previous summer was paid for from the appropriation for the succeeding year; having money in the treasury insufficient for the Winter school of 1862-3, under the circumstances your committee thought it best to have no school last summer, but during the summer we received a petition signed by several inhabitants of the district, asking us to open a school, and fearing, lest we might by neglecting to grant the petition, expose the town to indictment, we engaged Miss ALICE ADAMS to open a school, which she continued till obliged to close on account of ill health.

The expense of this school with arrearages due a former teacher, and for wood, drew so heavily on the appropriation for the current

year, that we had not enough to pay for the Winter school of more than ten weeks, and the school was lengthened by subscription, and we have nothing left to pay for a school the coming summer.

The district will want and perhaps demand a summer school, and your committee will be in about the same position of the Hebrews in Egypt, who were compelled to make brick but were deprived of the necessary straw.

We would respectfully ask the town to place the adequate means for a summer school at our disposal, or give us some instruction as to what we shall do under the circumstances.

Examinations.—It may be well to give some explanations about our examinations. The best method of examination depends in a good measure, on the object to be gained by it.

If the object is to make the school appear well, and all move along smoothly and beautifully as a show, then the frequent method of having the teacher ask all the questions, conduct all the exercises and give all the examples, is decidedly the best, and we would not even mix it with any impertinent questions on the part of the committee. But is this any part of the object of school examinations?

On the contrary, the object is that the district may know what *improvement* has been made by the scholars, and what is the worth of the teacher, and indirectly, though of first importance, to incite the pupils to thorough and ready knowledge.

The fact that they have not merely to *recite* their lessons, but to *know* them at the end of the term, is a strong inducement to thorough study and thorough reviews, and will do much to help avoid the great error of hurrying over much ground superficially, instead of a *little* thoroughly.

In order to gain these ends the committee have taken the examinations more into their own hands, though not so much yet, in some of the schools, as is probably best; and the older classes in Arithmetic and Geography have been examined topically. A list of the topics or divisions studied during the term, together with the names of the scholars composing the class, have been handed to the committee, who have assigned a topic to each member of the

class, and the class having been called out without their books, the topics thus assigned are read, and they are allowed to think over their topics while some other class or classes recite. The plan is nothing new, but is adopted by some of our best schools. Notice was given at the beginning of the year that this course would be pursued so that reviews might be conducted accordingly, and that no school should be taken by surprise or object that they did not know they were to be so examined.

The advantages of this plan are plain.

1st. It avoids all appearance and opportunity of stuffing for the occasion. This may never have been done, but it was impossible to avoid the impression that it might have been in some form, and hence even a very smooth and faultless examination could not be satisfactory, indeed the more faultless the more unsatisfactory.

2nd. It leads to a more thorough knowledge of the studies, because it is impossible thus to pass an examination well unless there is real knowledge, and hence there will be thorough study and thorough review, and there will be a strong incentive toward a higher standard both for teachers and classes.

3rd. There will be far less danger of a mere formal and verbal knowledge without catching the idea, or understanding the principles. Not unfrequently a scholar can answer a question when it is asked in a particular form, but when the very same question is asked in another form they have no answer whatever. They can solve a particular example given in the Arithmetic, but are utterly confused by an example in the very same form or involving precisely the same principles, but not found in the book.

A writer in a late number of the Mass. Teacher says that he visited a school where the scholars prided themselves on their proficiency in Colburn's Arithmetic. "Give them any example you please says the teacher, and they will solve it without the book." And they did it successfully, but when he gave them an example from his own head of precisely the same form and more easily solved, they were immediately in trouble. We have ourselves seen teachers correct scholars by reading the words of the book where the answer was at first correctly given, only in different words.

But this formal knowledge is not what we wish ; it is indeed very defective.

Now the method we are pursuing in our examinations and intend to pursue still more fully, does away with much of this evil. For when the questions are to be asked by other persons, and in a different manner from the one studied, and different examples given, both teacher and pupils will exert themselves to have a real knowledge of the studies to which they have attended ; a knowledge of ideas and principles.

As a matter of fact this plan has worked well ; better even than we anticipated. With the exception of a single school where the teacher did not co-operate with the committee in this matter, and where the pupils refused to recite thus at the examination, there *has not been for years such general excellence shown, and such pleasing and satisfactory examinations, as during the past winter.*

Vaccination.—The attention of the town has been called to the danger of neglecting vaccination, and the request has been made in nearly all the schools that the matter be attended to. The law of the state is very explicit. See General Statutes Chap. 41, Sec. 8. “The school committee *shall not allow* any child to be admitted to or connected with the public schools who has not been duly vaccinated.” There is also another law, Chap. 26, Sec. 27. “Parents and Guardians shall cause their children and their wards to be vaccinated before they attain the age of two years. For every year’s neglect the party offending shall forfeit the sum of five dollars.”

We are a law abiding community, and our own good and that of our children should also lead us to obey these laws.

We now proceed to give a brief report of each school.

EAST CENTRE DISTRICT.

HORACE WOODIS, Prudential Committee.

The Summer and Winter terms of this school were taught by Miss LOUISE P. ALLEN, of this town. Miss ALLEN has the elements of a first class teacher, and is in a school where always before male teachers have been employed, she exceeded our expectation, displaying tact, energy and ability, in a high degree. Through some opposition in the winter school to the method of examination pursued by the committee, (tho' precisely the same method as in the summer school and in all the schools of the town with success,) the closing examination was a partial failure, and did not manifest the progress which really was made.

Not absent or tardy in Summer,

Freddie H. Perkins,	George Adams,	George H. Lincoln,
Alice Tomlinson,	Ellen F. Knight,	Eva A. Hill,
Kate V. Rice,	Genevieve Woodis,	Alice Morse,
Lizzie Morse.		

Winter.

Helen F. Dean,	Ellen F. Knight,	Ella A. McCullar,
Lizzie J. Packard,	Alice A. Perkins,	Genevieve Woodis,
William A. Burt,	N. Wendall Packard,	Frank Tomlinson.

EAST HILL DISTRICT.

DANIEL TOWN, Prudential Committee.

WINTER TERM.—Miss MARY F. ROSS, of this town teacher.

There was no Summer school in this district. The scholars are not greatly advanced, and are few in number, but the teacher labored faithfully and well, and all was accomplished that could have been anticipated.

Not absent or tardy,

Hannah E. Drury,	Charles F. Dean,	John Maynard,
Wm. A. Maynard,	Henry M. Maynard.	

SOUTH DISTRICT.

ISAAC M. BOYD, Prudential Committee.

This school was taught both Summer and Winter by Miss CARRIE R. HARRINGTON of this town, who has been employed with good success in the schools. She gained here an unusual hold on the love and good will of the scholars, at the same time maintaining good order and commanding perfect respect. The committee on visiting the school during term time and at the examination, have been much pleased with the various exercises, especially the singing. There is much talent here and if properly trained and developed will make it one of the best schools in town.

Not absent or tardy, same scholars in both terms,

Jennie F. Adams,	Abbie J. Dean,	Nellie E. Dean,
Etta L. Dean,	Mary E. Dwelly,	Lizzie E. Morgan,
Jessie Morgan,	Mattie L. Boyd,	Hurlbut Dwelly,
Otis H. Adams.		

SOUTH WEST DISTRICT.

ELIJAH DEAN, Prudential Committee.

The Summer term was taught by Miss JOSEPHINE LELAND, of Shelburn, a teacher of some experience. The school was so small that the teacher was at a loss to know how to occupy all her time, but she earnestly endeavored to do her duty, and the examination was creditable to both teacher and scholars.

The Winter term was taught by Miss HELEN F. DEAN of Rutland, a successful and experienced teacher. The order was good and in all the studies there was commendable improvement, especially in reading, as noticed elsewhere in this report.

There has been much improvement in the discipline of this school during the past year.

WEST CENTRE DISTRICT.

LEONARD P. LOVELL, Prudential Committee.

Miss MARY A. LOVELL of Oakham, taught this school both Sum-

mer and Winter, where she has been employed three consecutive terms. We have formerly expressed our opinion of the ability and qualifications of this teacher, and her labors the past year have served to strengthen our good opinion of the same.

Not absent or tardy in Summer,

Ella A. Babbitt,	Ida F. Boyden,	Lucina C. Fuller,
Ida H. Lovell,	Alice J. Maynard,	Clara L. Rawson,
Abbie M. Rawson,	Martha A. Spooner,	Bernard P. Lovell,
Calvin D. Macomber.		

In Winter,

Mattie B. Allen,	Almira L. Fuller,	Lucina C. Fuller,
Louise Maynard,	Alice J. Maynard,	Ida H. Lovell,
James F. Robinson,	John E. Lovell,	Willie B. Gleason.

WEST DISTRICT.

LEWIS ALLEN and PERLEY AYRES, Prudential Committee.

The Summer term was taught by Miss MARIA R. CONANT of this town, an experienced teacher, in whom your committee have much confidence. Owing to the small number of scholars attending this school, it was thought best that it should be shorter than was originally intended. The few scholars present at the examination appeared to have made good improvement and the register showed that there had been punctual attendance.

Neither absent or tardy,

Willie H. Austin,	Henry P. Nurss,	Frank B. Nurss.
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The Winter term was taught by Mr. HENRY P. WRIGHT of Oakham, who fully sustained his high reputation as a teacher. The examination was a fine exhibition of well developed talent on the part of the scholars.

Not absent or tardy,

Kate A. Ayres,	Eleanor M. Crawford,	Willie H. Austin,
Charles H. Trowbridge,	James K. Clark.	

NORTH SCHOOL.

E. J. COWLES, Prudential Committee.

The Summer term was taught by Miss ALICE ADAMS of this town, who labored earnestly to do her duty, which she performed to the entire satisfaction of the committee and the district.

Neither absent or tardy,

Charlotte H. Adams,	Mary A. Adams,	Carrie F. Burr,
Rosa J. Bullard,	Mary M. Bullard,	Ella S. Fobes,
Levi H. Adams.		

The Winter term was taught by Miss KATE A. PECKHAM of Prescott. Her method of discipline was excellent, being at once firm and kind, and she had a good faculty for imparting instruction. In addition to these qualifications she was industrious and faithful, and we were well pleased with the school at the closing examination.

Not absent or tardy,

Charlotte Adams,	Ella L. Green,	Rosa J. Bullard,
Ella S. Fobes,	Lewis Green,	Franklin Caldwell.

COLDBROOK DISTRICT.

No Prudential Committee.

The Summer term was taught by Miss ALICE ADAMS. This teacher was employed by the general committee who felt assured of her ability by a knowledge of her former successes, and we doubt not she would have succeeded well had her health permitted her to finish the term.

Not tardy or absent,

Clarence H. Parker,	Evander L. Parker,	F. Rogene Parker,
D. Mildmay Parker,	David P. Walker,	Byron Young,
Mary E. Young.		

Miss ADA L. ROBINSON of Barre taught the Winter term. Miss Robinson is decidedly a competent teacher, both as to literary qualifications and capacity for government. She was untiring in her efforts to bring the school up to the right standard and the

result was very satisfactory, especially the improvement in the general order of the school.

Neither absent or tardy,

J. Orrin Perkins, D. Mildmay Parker, Hattie J. Perkins,
Charles W. Sibley, Evander L. Parker.

F. N. PELOUBET, } *School*
M. O. AYRES, } *Committee.*
H. W. LINCOLN, }

Oakham, March 15, 1864.

